



## Fact Sheet 18th Wing Kadena Air Base

# Community Relations

### *"Base Without Fences"*

Promoting goodwill between U.S. forces and host nations is a critical element of U.S. overseas presence. U.S. forces overseas do more than focus on potential adversaries; they seek to make tangible contributions to local communities through civic projects and quality community interaction.

Kadena conducts its community relations efforts under a philosophy called "Base Without Fences," a symbolic title describing an integrated approach promoting greater transparency and understanding of base activities by the people of Okinawa and Japan.

While Kadena needs a fence around its perimeter, that fence must not be a wall between people and cultures. "Base Without Fences" seeks to break down barriers through a range of traditional programs and new initiatives that reach out to community leaders, citizens and the news media.

For decades, Kadena people have volunteered to help the community and show appreciation to the people of Okinawa for their hospitality. These efforts include environmental clean-ups, teaching English, visiting hospitals, and repairing orphanages and senior citizen facilities. Since 1998, the base has built on previous successes through informal meetings between the wing commander and local mayors; volunteer events involving Americans and Okinawans, such as Special Olympics; and access and information for news media.



**A Kadena Air Base volunteer teams up with an Okinawan youngster during the April 2000 Special Olympics at Kadena.**

"Base Without Fences" is a base-level expression of the U.S. National Security Strategy and the U.S. East Asia-Pacific Security Strategy, both of which characterize engagement as a central part of American military presence overseas.

In particular, the latter strategy highlights the importance of volunteer efforts such as those conducted by Kadena, and emphasizes cooperation with local officials and communities.

On the local level, and consistent with operational security and available resources, Kadena's "Base Without Fences" philosophy mirrors America's commitment to conducting its regional affairs in an open and transparent manner. It helps remove any mystery or misunderstanding about the people, purpose and activities of the base.

Highlights of this successful outreach include:

## Community Interaction

**Special Olympics.** Kadena and the three surrounding communities of Okinawa City, Kadena Town and Chatan Town co-sponsored a Special Olympics at the base in April 2000. It was the base's largest Special Olympics ever with more than 1,000 U.S. and Okinawan athletes and volunteers taking part. Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine joined the wing commander in opening the Games with speeches. The governor's visit marked the first time in a number of years that an Okinawan governor spoke publicly on a U.S. military base at the invitation of the military.

**Joint Women's Forum.** The Joint Women's Forum attracted more than 800 people in May 2000. The forum -- open to Americans and Okinawans alike -- offered a wide variety of seminars focused on women's issues, finance, legal topics, and Okinawan/Japanese culture.



## Cultural exchange

An integral part of Kadena's community outreach effort is frequent cultural exchanges between U.S. and Okinawan citizens. At left, for example, local dancers train American children in one of Okinawa's colorful traditional dances. Americans take part in many Okinawan festivals and events, such as the Naha Dragon Boat Races and the Okinawa City International Festival.

### **AmericaFest**

Kadena's largest outreach effort, AmericaFest is a three- to four-day open house that features aircraft static displays, information booths and displays, concessions and entertainment. As many as 200,000 Okinawans visit AmericaFest annually. The outreach gives Okinawans the opportunity to learn more about U.S. military, particularly Air Force, roles and capabilities.



*Noriko Inamine, wife of Okinawa governor Keiichi Inamine, demonstrates calligraphy at the Joint Women's Forum.*

**English-speaking Internship Program.** In 1999, the base welcomed eight students studying at the Kadena Town Language Institute. As part of an internship program, the students were given the opportunity to work on the base in an English-speaking environment.

**Okinawa Marathon.** This Olympic-qualifying marathon runs through the base each February. Sponsored by 12 municipalities in central Okinawa, the event attracts upwards of 10,000 runners from throughout Japan and the Pacific. Kadena supports the race by opening its gates to runners, race officials, and spectators. In addition, hundreds of Kadena volunteers support the race by handing refreshments to the runners.

**Golden Run.** This annual military-community friendship run takes place during Golden Week, the first week in May. Jointly sponsored by the 18th Wing, the Rising Sun Running Club, and the local Okinawa Runners Club, it is a series of 5K, 10K and half-marathon on-base races supported by more than 200 volunteers from the base and community.

**Dragon Boat Races.** Naha dragon boat races are held annually at Aja Port, Naha, in conjunction with the start of the annual tourist season in May and June. Each year, the U.S. military provides men's and women's teams that compete against Okinawan groups and each other.

**Okinawa International Carnival.** Generally celebrated each October outside Kadena's Gate 2, this is the largest local festival in a community neighboring Kadena. It promotes international friendship with Americans and other foreigners living in Okinawa City. Thousands of military people and their families join Okinawans in the 10,000 Citizen's Parade and a giant tug of war between children.

## **Volunteer Activities**

Kadena members strive to leave a positive legacy of volunteerism during their tour at Kadena by regularly giving of their time, talents and resources to enhance the U.S./Okinawan relationship.

American volunteers participate in numerous cleanups and repairs of



**Kadena members take part in a luncheon dedicated to Okinawa senior citizens.**

orphanages, hospitals, retirement homes, single-mother homes and sea walls. Work includes cutting grass, trimming hedges, painting and minor construction. Volunteers often host a picnic for the people they assist. Unit commanders are encouraged to "adopt" a volunteer effort so their people can leave positive "finger-prints" on the community.

Volunteers also teach English at local elementary schools and assist with and take part in Okinawa festivals and sports competitions. Additionally, **Tomono-kai**, a friendship council comprised of women from three local municipalities and Kadena members, holds an annual luncheon for 100 senior citizens to show appreciation and respect for Okinawans who rebuilt the island after the war.

## **Media Outreach**

A major element of "Base Without Fences" has been increasing access and information for the media to help ensure reporters are better informed about base issues. Media outreach efforts have included the following:

- **Media Days:** In 1999, Kadena began conducting periodic Media Days to offer reporters close-up looks at various aspects of the base mission including operations, technology and the environment. The first Media Day was a general orientation and included a mission briefing and base tour, plus a two-hour discussion with the wing commander. Reporters attending could not recall any similar briefing in the past decade. On all subsequent Media Days, the wing commander has met with reporters for at least an hour in an open question-and-answer session to clarify base issues.
- **Executive Outreach:** The wing commander met with senior executives from major Okinawan media outlets for a briefing, base tour, and to discuss base issues.



**Media representatives cover an event at Kadena. "Base Without Fences" has increased accessibility for news media in terms of covering operational, recreational and social activities at Kadena.**

- **Rapid Response:** Public Affairs provides rapid response to media queries and requests during high-profile events. For example, after two recent aircraft incidents, the wing leadership conducted press conferences and site tours within five hours of the event to inform the media and public on base response efforts.
- **Media visits and orientation:** The Public Affairs Office regularly invites media to major events on Kadena, and periodically conducts media orientation flights.
- **Bilingual media products:** The Public Affairs Office publishes many of its products, such as news releases, fact sheets and base newspaper articles, in both English and Japanese.

Media outreach enables the base to explain its mission in detail and provide an informed context for reporters. Providing access helps avoid misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy, and builds credibility for both the base and the media.

The editorial charter of media on Okinawa is generally in favor of reducing the presence of U.S. military bases on the island, and coverage of U.S. military issues and events frequently reflects this policy. However, Kadena's policy of access, information and outreach has helped reporters increase their understanding of the U.S. perspective of the strategic importance of Okinawa.

Kadena's central concern is that the base and media be in agreement on the facts of base issues. "Base Without Fences" has included a consistent effort to provide timely and accurate information within the bounds of operational security and policy.

## Tours

As the largest U.S. military installation in the Asia-Pacific region, Kadena is a popular base for visitors.

Base tours for Japanese national, prefectural and municipal government officials from mainland Japan take place eight to 12 times a month. In addition, 25 educational tours are provided for Japan Air Self Defense Force members. An average of seven tours per month are given to Okinawan business representatives, community groups and students. The goal of Kadena's tour program is to foster understanding and support from local residents.

Monthly community base tours are a recent addition to the community outreach program. Once a month, Kadena Town and Okinawa City residents are invited to tour the base's historical and cultural sites to learn more about Okinawa's history and culture. Markers explaining the significance of these sites are written in both Japanese and English.

## Leadership Initiatives

**Okinawa City Economic and Cultural Exchange Promotion Council.** Better known as the Friendship Council, the group is the only official friendship council established between any U.S. military base and a local community on Okinawa. Established in 1997, its aim is to promote friendship and cultural exchanges between Kadena and Okinawa City residents. The council also conducts events for base and Okinawa City youth. Events have included a tea ceremony, softball games, a river cleanup, and Pacific Air Forces Band concerts.

**Meetings with Mayors.** Kadena's 18th Wing commander conducts quarterly meetings with the mayors of three surrounding municipalities to provide an informal forum for candid discussion. The commander also hosts a semi-annual gathering on base with local community leaders, Japan Air Self Defense Force commanding officers, business leaders and government officials.

## Historical/Cultural Site Preservation

The World War II Battle of Okinawa took many lives and destroyed numerous historical sites on the island. Because of this, Okinawans and Americans alike seek to preserve the many historical sites on Kadena. The base maintains 92 historical/cultural sites including shrines, tombs, villages, caves and World War II historical sites. Kadena works with local boards of education to ensure that sites are properly documented so they may be preserved.



## Joint Training



***Firefighters team up in a joint exercise using Kadena's high-tech, propane-fueled mobile aircraft fire simulator. The exercise was part of a conference that included U.S. military and Okinawan firefighters.***

Joint training provides an excellent opportunity for Kadena to build strong ties with the Japan Air Self Defense Force as well as local emergency response personnel.

Kadena units regularly train with the JASDF in as many as three major exercises per year. They include Cope North, Keen Sword, and Keen Edge. The exercises enable both forces to hone their air combat and ground support skills, to share combat tactics and capabilities, and strengthen the U.S.-Japanese defense alliance.

Over the past two years, JASDF and Kadena aircrew members have participated in ground-breaking exercises. In April, 1999, JASDF F-15s and other aircraft flew to Guam on their first-ever deployment out of Japan to participate in Cope North Guam, a joint training exercise with U.S. fighters and support aircraft. In the annual Cope Angel exercise in July 1999, Kadena's 33rd Rescue Squadron and JASDF rescue teams participated in their first-ever joint night rescue training.

Locally, the base plays host to annual joint firefighter training for hundreds of U.S. and Okinawan participants. Firefighters team up to battle blazes and other related challenges using Kadena's state-of-the-art equipment, such as the high-tech propane-fueled mobile aircraft fire simulator that has eliminated the need for diesel fuel burns that previously caused large columns of black smoke.

Local disaster response has been a longstanding concern of Kadena and local officials. In March 2000, the base invited local police, firefighters and government officials to observe a disaster response exercise involving base personnel. This was the first time local officials had witnessed the process Kadena uses to train for disasters.

## Summary

"Base Without Fences" is Kadena's effort to partner with the Okinawan people through operational, environmental and community venues. As the base demonstrates its appreciation for the contributions of the Okinawan people to the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security treaty, our hope is that mutual trust and respect between Kadena and the people of Okinawa will grow.

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